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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NORRISTOWN WOMAN ARRESTED FOR HOMICIDE BY VEHICLE-DUI IN FATAL CRASH IN EAST NORRITON TOWNSHIP**



**ARBETINA JOHNSON-LOWRY**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Jan. 8, 2024) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and East Norriton Township Police Chief Phil Pulaski announce the arrest of Arbetina Johnson-Lowery, 35, of Norristown, for Homicide by Vehicle-DUI and other charges related to the Sept. 30, 2023, crash in East Norriton Township that caused the death of her 14-month-old son.

On Sept. 30, 2023, East Norriton Township Police responded at 2:43 p.m., to Old Arch Road and East Johnson Highway for a vehicle-SEPTA bus crash. Police arrived to find that a Mazda MPV minivan, driven by Johnson-Lowery, had crashed into the stopped bus. The baby, found by witnesses lying on the backseat floorboard suffering from severe injuries, was transported by ambulance to Suburban Hospital, then flown by helicopter to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where he later died of blunt impact injuries to his head. Johnson-Lowery was entrapped and had to be extracted; she was transported to Abington Hospital with multiple injuries. The bus driver was transported to Einstein-Montgomery Hospital and treated for a knee injury.

In processing the scene, detectives found in the Mazda two empty bottles of Yukon Jack whiskey and a Newport cigarette box containing partially smoked marijuana

cigarettes. The Newport box was later found to also contain a foil packet of cocaine. Additionally, detectives located a child's car seat in backseat of the Mazda, but the restraints were not correctly set for the baby's size.

The joint crash investigation by East Norriton Township Police and the Montgomery County Detective Bureau found through surveillance video onboard the SEPTA bus as well as witness accounts that the SEPTA bus was travelling westbound on East Johnson Highway when it stopped to load/unload passengers. Johnson-Lowery's Mazda MPV was travelling eastbound on East Johnson Highway at a high rate of speed when it made slight contact with the rear bumper of a vehicle in front of it, then crashed into the driver's side of the SEPTA bus. Detectives determined the Mazda was traveling between 47 and 50 mph on the 35-mph zone just prior to striking the bus.

Testing on Johnson-Lowery's blood found Bromazolam (a designer benzodiazepine drug, similar to fentanyl), methamphetamine, metabolites of cocaine and a small amount of alcohol. The investigation also found that Johnson-Lowery's driver's license had been suspended since September 2018 and the Mazda's registration had been suspended on Jan. 21, 2023, for insurance cancellation.

Johnson-Lowery is charged with Homicide by Vehicle–DUI, DUI, Accidents Involving Death While Not Properly Licensed, five counts of Recklessly Endangering Another Person and related charges. She turned herself into police on Jan. 5, 2024, and was arraigned by Magisterial District Judge Maurice H. Saylor, who set bail at \$500,000 unsecured, with a condition of no driving. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 11:45 a.m., Feb. 5, 2024, before Magisterial District Judge Marc A. Alfarano.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Gabriella Glenning.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

*CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.*